**A Tribute to Fred Adams**

1899 – 1977

By Vicar Bernard Houghton

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Some infants seem to be chosen by God for special tasks in this world. Such was Fred Adams born in 1899, who soon after his eighteenth birthday was pitched into the vile trenches of Flanders in 1917, where he managed to survive at least one assault by a German who nearly strangled him; and at his nineteenth birthday was captured by the Germans and kept as a prisoner until the end of that grim war.

By 1953 he had joined the group of nearly twenty thousand Churchwardens of the Church of England and was soon coping with the duties of the job, when the Rev. Moreton moved and five years later when Robert Sharpe moved. He met me on a cold February afternoon in 1961, showed me round the Church and the empty Vicarage, and said that it would be good to have a Vicar's wife, and even some young children in the house after twenty-two years.

Although he hinted that a few of the congregation had been pulling in different directions, I soon realised that he was being very loyal to the whole parish, and very modest about the way he had shouldered many responsibilities in the village over the past twenty-seven years. On my first Sunday in May he came at 8.00am. to serve at the altar, f then found him next to me in the choir at 11.00am. and again at 6.00pm. and I learned he had repeatedly taken over the Sunday School when there was no Vicar; and that he and Min had usually put up at weekends the visiting clergy, and fed them, for months at a time. Il also met him at the Guild meetings of the Servers nearly every month, and again was meeting with him with the School managers when we had to build a new school at Speen, and face £86,000 of new building at Lacey Green in the next fourteen years.

For a lot of this time, he had been Secretary of the Village Hall, and I believe had been helping in the Sports Club, so that almost every day of the week Fred was forwarding the work of the Church and the village, with the tremendous help of a dedicated wife. She, I discovered, had also been washing the Church albs, the altar linen and many surplices for many years, with no rewards; and saving for, working for and cooking for many Mothers' Union efforts over the years.

For 40 years Fred was also a Special Constable in Risborough. During my years here I have met many men who in the last war went through more grim experiences than I have ever had to face, and so I have tried to understand their feelings, with respect. This I have learned about those few who came back from the war in 1919, and who, like this later generation, mostly dropped out of Church life for good. Fred has done my faith a power of good, because I have seen him take on jobs that few men wanted, putting his faith in God into practice with a quiet courage, cheerfulness and unselfishness which over sixty years, since 1917, would not be easy to match. May his soul rest in peace: and he will be another good friend I shall look forward to meeting arain.